

## New Lyle Hotel owners aim to 'Make it what it's meant to be'

By **AMBER MARRA**  
The Enterprise

It hasn't been easy, but the Lyle Hotel is back in business.

Richard and Trece Simpson bought the historic, 10-room hotel last July and began remodeling it in August. Originally built in 1905, the Lyle Hotel had sat closed and unoccupied since 2012 until the Simpsons scooped it up.

Though there is still work to be done on the exterior of the building, the Simpsons have lightened up the interior of the hotel. The lobby's previously crimson walls have been changed to a creamy antique white and the bar area, which was a simple light oak surrounded by blue walls, has been stained and is now backed by an antique piece of furniture that features intricate carvings.

"We didn't know what it used to be. We'd been to Hood River a bunch of times but we had no idea what the Lyle Hotel used to be. Our goal is to make it what it's meant to be now," Trece said.

Though neither of the Simpsons has ever run a hotel before, both are feeling confident about their business's potential given their separate backgrounds and experiences. Richard is a classically trained chef from the California Culinary

Academy and even served as a cook with the USA cycling team for the 1989 Tour de France, while Trece managed orthodontic practices for 25 years, as well as a construction business.

And so that's how it works: He manages the kitchen and the food side of things, while she handles the hotel and hospitality.

"This opportunity has been the perfect culmination of all our experience. It was the most natural thing for us to do," Trece said.

The interior decoration of the hotel isn't all that's changed. Richard said in order to get the kitchen up to snuff it had to be totally gutted.

Since opening, he's managed the restaurant's menu, which changes periodically and focuses on French, Italian, and American cuisine. Everything is made from scratch and eventually the menu will feature all locally sourced ingredients, similar to the bar menu, which includes all locally sourced beer and wine.

"It's an all-star lineup," Richard said.

It is the hope that the Lyle Hotel can serve the recreation community of hikers, mountain bikers, kite boarders, and windsurfers that come to Lyle, but also those who flock to the surrounding hills throughout the year to

visit the multiple wineries that now call Lyle home.

"We have tried to make it as much of a symbiotic relationship as possible. We're sending the wineries people and they're sending people down here," Richard said.

The Simpsons also want the Lyle Hotel to be a go-to spot for the local community. Since opening on New Year's Eve, the bar and restaurant have been open for dinner starting at 4 p.m. every day except Tuesday and brunch on weekends from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., giving them plenty of opportunities to hear about residents' previous experiences at the hotel.

Upon hearing of the Lyle Hotel's reopening, one customer decided to repeat history.

"Fourteen years ago his then-new-date surprised him by picking him up after work and not telling him where they were going until they got here, so they had their romantic dinner and not long after were engaged and have been married for 14 years since, so when he found out the hotel was reopening he did the same thing for her for New Year's Eve," Trece said.

That said, there have been some growing pains associated with opening a hotel for the first time and revamping its restaurant. During their Valentine's Day celebration, the hotel was fully booked and

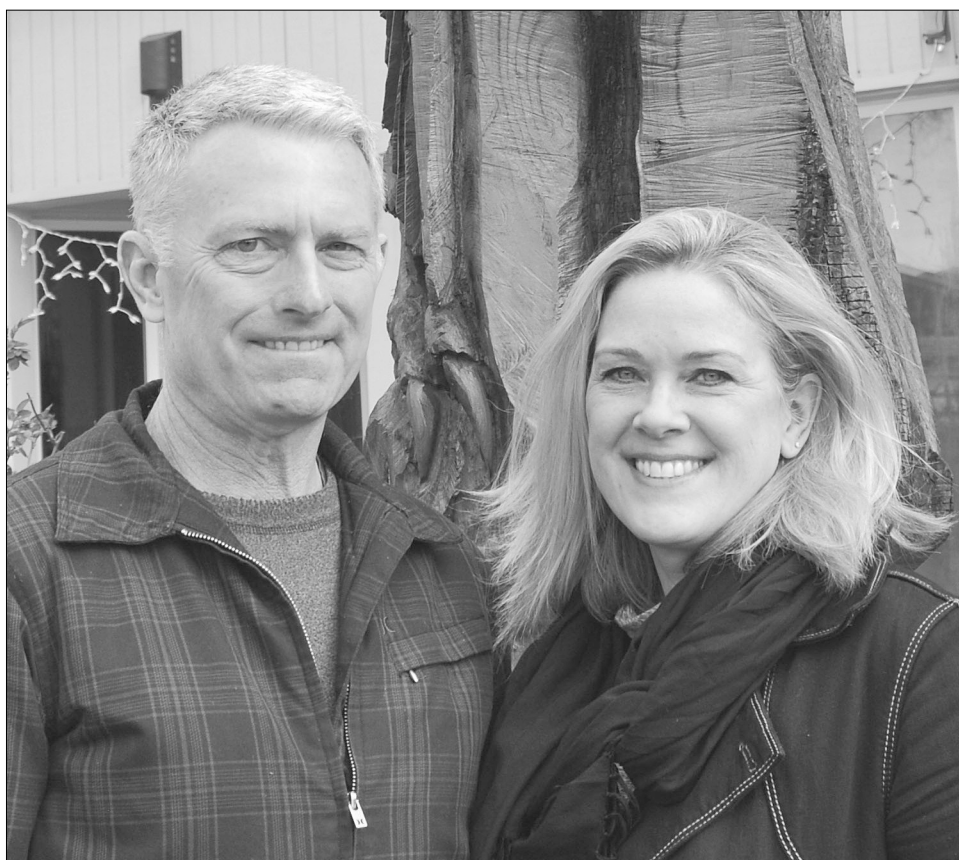


Photo by Amber Marra

several items on the restaurant's menu sold out. For the upcoming St. Patrick's Day celebration, which will feature live music and a special menu, the Simpsons say they are ready for more.

"We want the food to evolve and have it all be a good, new experience. That's what we want to do," Trece said.

**RICHARD AND TRECE** Simpson have brought life back to the Lyle Hotel, which closed in 2012 and recently reopened under their ownership. A classically trained chef, Richard creates menus for the newly renovated restaurant area and keeps the bar stocked with local beer and wine, while Trece welcomes guests and manages the rest of the hotel.

Whether it's an intimate dinner setting for two, or simply unwinding with co-workers after a long day, the Tiger Lounge is the perfect place to relax and enjoy yourself.

Grace Su's  
**CHINA GORGE**  
Restaurant  
& Tiger Lounge  
Open Tues.-Sun. 11am-9pm  
Intersection of Hwys 30 & 35  
(541) 386-5331 • Hood River  
www.chinagorge.com

## Friends of the Columbia Gorge offers Spring-Summer Hike Program

Events celebrate Friends' 35th anniversary



Photo by Mark McConnell

**SPRING SCENES** like this one await hikers who sign up for the Friends of the Columbia Gorge's Spring-Summer Hike program that runs from March through July. Sign-ups for the general public begin Friday, March 6; see [www.gorgefriends.org](http://www.gorgefriends.org) for more information.

hike with the whole family on kid-friendly waterfall walks; spend a day wiking (hiking followed by wine tasting) or go from an invigorating trail to a refreshing beer at a Gorge brewpub on a Trails to Ales outing. Let Friends take you to Gorge spots beyond the

ones you can see from the road.

Online registration for hikes started this week at Friends' Hike With Friends page ([gorgefriends.nonprofitsoapbox.com/hikes](http://gorgefriends.nonprofitsoapbox.com/hikes)) for Friends members, and begins Friday, March 6 for the general public. Many of the outings are open to the public, though some are for members only. Friends' basic membership is \$35 annually. You can join when signing up for a hike, either online or by contacting Kate Lindberg, Outreach Assistant, at 971-634-1265 or [katel@gorgefriends.org](mailto:katel@gorgefriends.org).

"While you can always explore the Gorge on your own, we can take you to places you've never seen, hear stories you've never heard and meet people you'll never forget," said Friends Executive Director Kevin Gorman. "Our staff and volunteer hike leaders and shepherds are eager to share their knowledge and enthusiasm. Not just preserving the land, but experiencing it, has always been part of Friends' mission during our 35 years advocating for the Gorge."

The guided hikes and outings aren't all the Spring/Summer program offers. Friends is launching the 35 & Gorgeous hike challenge later this month. The challenge invites participants to hike 15 trails and complete 20 other activities (from visiting waterfalls to identifying wildflowers) as a way of commemorating the 35 years that Friends of the Columbia Gorge has spent working to protect this unique American natural treasure.

Friends is also re-launching its Play & Stay program as an all-inclusive Columbia Gorge weekend vacation package. A single price includes activities, a Friends staff member as a guide, lodging, transportation, and meals. Choose from two weekend options, held April 10-12 and May 15-17.

Visit the Friends of the Columbia Gorge website at [www.gorgefriends.org](http://www.gorgefriends.org).

Spring is in the air a bit earlier than usual in the Columbia River Gorge — ready to get out and explore? It's a great time to kick off a new season of discovery: fascinating trails, colorful wildflowers, bracing waterfalls, and a new wealth of Gorge discoveries! From March 15-July 18, Friends of the Columbia Gorge will host over 65 hikes, outings, and land stewardship events as it celebrates the organization's 35th anniversary.

## Public meeting on Rooster Rock future March 18

A public meeting for Rooster Rock State Park is scheduled for Wednesday, March 18. Park staff with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) will present site development plan options for the park that include improving the park entrance and developing an accessible walking path along the Columbia River, while maintaining existing park features.

Proposed improvements aim to increase interpretation and ranger-led educational programs that highlight the natural and cultural history of the Gorge, as outlined in the 2015 OPRD Columbia

River Gorge Management Units Plan (available at [www.gorgeparksplan.com](http://www.gorgeparksplan.com), pages 154-57).

The meeting will be held from 6-8 p.m. at the Corbett Fire House, 36930 E. Historic Columbia River Highway.

Another planning meeting will be held in May to review a preferred site plan option. A timeline for construction has not been set.

Visit [www.gorgeparksplan.com](http://www.gorgeparksplan.com) and join the mailing list to stay updated on the process, or contact Ben Hedstrom at (503) 986-0745 or [ben.hedstrom@orgeon.gov](mailto:ben.hedstrom@orgeon.gov) with any questions.

**Joe Guenther**  
Financial Advisor

1631 Woods Ct  
Suite 102  
Hood River, OR  
97031  
541-386-0826  
[www.edwardjones.com](http://www.edwardjones.com) Member SIPC



**Edward Jones**  
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

**Your Mortgage Lender**

Call Bernie today  
541-490-0167



**Bernie Dittenhofer**  
Licensed Mortgage Banker  
NMLS #2550 NMLS #114231 ML 832-21

**WESTCORP MORTGAGE GROUP**  
A division of Mann Mortgage, LLC  
509 Cascade Ave., Suite F, Hood River  
Apply at [berniedittenhofer.westcorp mortgage.com](http://berniedittenhofer.westcorp mortgage.com)

**THE 51<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL PINE GROVE FIRE DEPT. AUCTION**  
SATURDAY, MARCH 7<sup>TH</sup> • 9 A.M.

NOW ACCEPTING DONATIONS OR CONSIGNMENTS OF:  
Appliances, furniture, toys, antiques, collectibles, power tools, hand tools, cars, trucks, boats, motorcycles, bikes, snowmobiles, tractors, trailers, household items, garden tools, lawnmowers, rototillers, equipment of all types.

We ask that all items be in working order.  
Business Owners: Please consider donating excess or obsolete stock.  
Please bring items to the Firehouse.  
For more information or drop-off times, call 541-806-1173.  
Located 4 miles south of Hood River on Hwy. 35 at Van Horn Drive

## WEEKLY SUDOKU

This week's Sudoku presented by:  
**YOUR BUSINESS NAME**  
Answers on Page A6

1			2	3	4
	3		5		1 6
		7		3	
	6		1	4	2
	9				3
	5	3	7		4
5		8		1	
2	7		3		9
3		6	4		2

Fill in all 81 squares on the puzzle with numbers 1 to 9. You can use each number 1-9 only once in each nine square section, in each horizontal line of nine squares, and in each vertical column of nine squares. The puzzle is completed when you correctly fill every square.

**Advertise Your Business or Service Here**  
call 541-386-1234

**Bonus Winner #2**  
**Oliver Zuck**

cashed in as a bonus winner in this year's Hood River News Kids Subscription Campaign!



**It's Happening Now!**  
Spread the News  
Kids Campaign Ends March 14

**Phonemic Awareness** **Comprehension**

**the BIG 5**

**Fluency** **Vocabulary** **Phonics**

**What Parents & Teachers Need to Know about Learning to Read**  
with Cheryl Anthony,  
Successful Learning Educational Services, LLC

**FREE EVENT**  
**Tuesday, March 10th**  
**6:30 - 8:00pm**  
Hood River Hotel  
102 Oak Street | Hood River

Reading is the FOUNDATION for educational success, and it MUST start early!

2 CEU Credits from Lewis & Clark \$20

Questions? Email us:  
[columbiagorge@decodingdyslexiaor.org](mailto:columbiagorge@decodingdyslexiaor.org)

